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Citation for published version:

Loxley, J 2010, *Dramatis Personae: Royalism, Theatre and the Political Ontology of the Person in Post-regicide Writing*. in *Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum*. Politics, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain, Manchester University Press, pp. 149-70.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Royalists and Royalism during the Interregnum

Publisher Rights Statement:

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Dramatis Personae: Royalism, Theatre and the Political Ontology of the Person in Post-regicide Writing.

I

On June 28th 1660, the officially appointed thanksgiving day for ‘His Majesties Happy Return to His Kingdoms’, William Towers delivered a sermon during the service held at Exeter House, London.¹ The son of one of ‘the most combative of Laudian bishops’, and a participant in proto-royalist and royalist activities as both a cleric and a writer during the 1630s and 40s, Towers had lost his preferments fourteen years previously.² Like others of his stripe, he had relied since the defeat of the royalist cause on the support of sympathisers still able to offer patronage, yet he was now on his way to renewed institutional preferment as a result of the restored political power of Mountjoy Blunt, the earl of Newport.³ Among his other patrons he counted James Compton, the third Earl of Northampton, whose father Spencer, the second Earl, had died a royalist hero at Hopton Heath in March 1643. James Compton’s own royalism and literary interests led him to support a number of similarly inclined writers and actors during the 1650s.⁴ The patronage of the Compton family had previously benefited William’s father

¹ *A Form of Prayer, with Thanksgiving* (London, 1660); *By the King, A Proclamation for Setting Apart a Day of Solemn and Publick Thanksgiving Throughout the Whole Kingdom* (London, 1660).

² J. Fielding, ‘Towers, John (d. 1649)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27586>, accessed 29 July 2007]; James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: the Drawn Sword* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1997), 22 and 208.

³ Fielding, ‘Towers, John’.

⁴ William Proctor Williams, ‘The Castle Ashby Manuscripts: a Description of the Volumes in Bishop Percy’s List,’ *The Library*, 6th series, 2 (1980), 392-412; W. H. Kelliher, ‘Compton, James, third Earl of Northampton (1622-81)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46937>, accessed 29 July 2007].

John – indeed, William himself was probably named after the first Earl, while two of his siblings bore the names Spencer and Compton.

Unsurprisingly, his sermon that June was a steadfast reiteration of royalist principles. Towers took as his text the beginning of the first verse of Psalm 21, ‘The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord’, and developed out of this text an argument summarised emphatically in the sermon’s title as printed: ‘Obedience Perpetually due to KINGS, Because the KINGLY POWER Is Inseperable from the ONE King’s Person’.⁵ Here, at the monarchy’s moment of triumph, one of its long-toothed partisans took the opportunity to insist once more on an article of royalist faith that had shared in that institution’s trials since the now King’s father was turned away from the gates of Hull in 1642. For Towers, the restoration of the monarchy permitted or called for the renewed resort to a royalist language of personal rule that had been the subject of explicit challenge throughout the ideological and military struggles of the 1640s and early 1650s. Its particular anatomy of kingship could again be affirmed as scripturally supported doctrine:

The *Power* of the King is, in Scripture-stile the very same with the King, his *Authority* and his *Person* but *one, one and the same*, so little can his authority be *virtually* (or any otherwise then *viciously*) be [sic] *evangelically* pretended against the commands of his *Person*.⁶

What the Parliamentarians and their successors had sundered and destroyed could now be reasserted, and proclaiming it so would produce the containment of a certain kind of drama, a kind that royalists like Towers were presumably keen to see restored to its proper place:

⁵ William Towers, *Obedience Perpetually due to Kings, Because the Kingly Power Is Inseperable from the One King’s Person* (London, 1660).

⁶ Towers, *Obedience*, 9.

Either *power* is perpetually in his *Person*, or the authority of a King is devolvable upon some other, *one* or *more* persons; if upon *one*, then there may be *a King and no King* upon the *Throne*, as well as upon the *Stage*; there may be a King upon earth, which, upon the same spot of earth, hath a King above him, and who would not hisse at the man that should say so? ⁷

In this passage, Towers' reference to Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's archetypal tragicomedy and evocation of a theatrical situation are entwined with the resonant issue of the 'personality' of authority. The implication of Towers' claim is that the monarch's person must serve as a singular locus of sovereign power, and in doing so can hold together both the polity he governs and, at the same time, himself. Untune that string, and what follows is an entanglement in constitutional paradox hazardous both to king and country. It is striking that *A King and No King*, and the art form of which it was an instance, should still prove to be the mnemonic through which such issues, and such perils, are called to mind.⁸ Equally interesting is the implication that the tragicomic paradoxes of monarchy give a glimpse of a form of drama that is not merely a cultural form endorsed and embraced by royalism or seen as the property of early Stuart court culture, but can also figure the standing threat of that institution's dissolution.⁹ If 1660

⁷ Towers, *Obedience*, 6.

⁸ A number of literary critics and historians have also thought the role of tragicomedy in the civil wars worthy of more than a mention, though they have not pursued it in quite the same direction as I do here. See in particular Lois Potter, "'True Tragicomedies' of the Civil War and Commonwealth", in Nancy Klein Maguire, ed., *Renaissance Tragicomedy* (New York: AMS Press, 1987), 196-217, Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 100-112, Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 190-215, and Dale Randall, *Winter Fruit: English Drama, 1642-1660* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 337-68.

⁹ Lois Potter described the typical Guarini-inspired pre-war English tragicomedy as 'a play whose source might be Greek romance or Italian pastoral, but whose immediate context was the court and its circle of gentlemen amateurs' (Potter, "'True Tragicomedies'", 196); see also Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 190-202. In the more obviously polarised context of 1647, the publication of the plays of the acknowledged English masters of tragicomedy, Beaumont and Fletcher, was seen and is still understood as a royalist gesture. See Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 194.

offered the opportunity to proclaim not just the happy resolution of a tragicomic play, but also the end of a kind of tragicomic *theatricality*, then royalism's relation to such a drama was bound to be an awkward one.

II

The substance of this tragicomic theatre – a substance that is not necessarily to be divorced from considerations of form or genre – can be found, Towers suggests, in the politics of monarchy that his sermon seeks finally to put beyond the reach of controversy. Such a politics is perhaps better understood as a 'political ontology',¹⁰ an attempt to set out that which 'essentiates a King into the very being of a King', as Towers puts it in his sermon.¹¹ To talk of political ontology in this context is inevitably to recall Ernst Kantorowicz's influential work on 'political theology', work that sought to set out an intellectual and cultural frame not only for English renaissance drama but also for the ideological conflicts of the 1640s.¹² Kantorowicz famously suggested that a mythic, monarch-centred doctrine of the 'king's two bodies' was an animating presence in English constitutional thought up to and including the debates of the civil war, and that it was in such a doctrinal distinction between the monarch's 'immaterial and immortal body politic and his material and mortal body natural' that Parliament found the constitutional rationale and justification for their armed resistance to Charles during the 1640s.¹³ More recent historians have also felt justified not only in referring to such a doctrine but also in endorsing its relevance to civil war controversies and even to the Restoration political

¹⁰ I borrow the phrase 'political ontology' and its usage most immediately from Philip Pettit, 'Rawls's Political Ontology', *Politics, Philosophy and Economics* 4 (2005), 157-74, though it is also in more general circulation with slightly different inflections. See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) and Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: the Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999).

¹¹ Towers, *Obedience*, 10.

¹² Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

¹³ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 20-21.

imagination. Not without challenge, though: others have cast doubt on the credibility of any assertion that a theologically derived conception of kingship sat at the heart of English constitutional debate during the early modern period.¹⁴ To deploy a label such as political ontology here is to keep hold of some aspects of the Kantorowiczian perspective without thereby endorsing his peculiar methodological and intellectual presuppositions.

Certainly, the question of what constitutes ‘the very being of a king’ is a central point of contest in mid-seventeenth century politics and culture. It arises forcefully in the impassioned war of declaration and counter-declaration preceding the raising of the king’s standard in 1642, and animates the different layers of disagreement in which the *Answer to the XIX Propositions* participates. In these debates, the issue of what makes a king a king, of how his authority is to be understood, is a prominent feature.¹⁵ The promulgation of the Solemn League and Covenant a year later placed a particular emphasis on the status of the king’s ‘person’, and required the kind of exegesis that is to be found in works such as Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex, Rex* of 1644.¹⁶ While Rutherford’s particular object was the doctrinal certitude of Bishop John Maxwell, a wide range of variously royalist writers and theorists sustained the debates with definitions and arguments forged in the king’s capital at Oxford.¹⁷ After the defeat of the royalist armies

¹⁴ Marie Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 506-509, Paul Hammond, *The Making of Restoration Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 107-36, David Norbrook, ‘The Emperor’s New Body: *Richard II*, Ernst Kantorowicz and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism’, *Textual Practice* 10 (1996), 329-57, and Lorna Hutson, ‘Not the King’s Two Bodies: Reading the Body Politic in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*’, in Victoria Kahn and Lorna Hutson, eds, *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 166-89.

¹⁵ Michael Mendle, *Dangerous Positions: Mixed Government, the Estates of the Realm, and the Making of the Answer to the XIX Propositions* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1985), Michael Mendle, *Henry Parker and the English Civil War: the Political Thought of the Public’s “Privado”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), David Smith, *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 177, and Norbrook, ‘Emperor’s New Body’, 343-4.

¹⁶ Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, the Law and the Prince: a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People* (London, 1644), especially 265-80.

¹⁷ See Smith, *Constitutional Royalism*, 219-55, and Glenn Burgess, ‘Repacifying the Polity’, in Ian Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden, eds, *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 202-28.

in the field, the issues were given another vigorous airing in the debates around Thomas Chaloner's so-called 'speech out of doors' in 1646; later still, the king's trial for treason, the abolition of 'the kingly office' and the proscription of Charles's elder sons, as well as the promulgation of the Engagement to the republic's new citizens, obviously required claims about the nature of monarchy and monarchs.¹⁸ To this extent, ontology was an urgent business. Yet the fact that so many of these controversies were impelled by the status of both Charles I and Charles II as kings of more than one kingdom, that they were therefore picking up on, rewriting or reaffirming positions debated even before the union of the Scottish and English crowns, and using languages other than that of English law, points to the longevity and pedigree of this discussion.¹⁹

This might well sound merely like a reiteration, in different terms, of Kantorowicz's model. The difference in terms is important, though: it recognises that no clearly established 'two bodies doctrine' can be found here, and that the debate around the nature of kingship is in fact a struggle to establish the validity or legitimacy of a set of terms. Indeed, to speak of political ontology is to focus on the ways in which the composite or complex notion of 'king' can be reduced, polemically and with much immediately at stake, to supposedly more primary notions or elements that might well draw on non-monarchical forms of political and more broadly philosophical thought. Far from being the most fundamental of any such notions, the body might well be only one among a number of competing alternatives. In exploring the debate in this way, historians have sometimes posited a distinction between (private) person and (public)

¹⁸ Sarah Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism: Politics and Ethics in the English Revolution, 1646-1659* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), D. Alan Orr, *Treason and the State: Law, Politics and Ideology in the English Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Jason Peacey, ed., *The Regicides and the Execution of Charles I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

¹⁹ David Scott, 'Motives for King-Killing', in Peacey, ed., *The Regicides*, 138-60. See also the essays in Robert von Freideburg, ed., *Murder and Monarchy: Regicide in European History, 1300-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), and Howard Nenner, *The Right to be King: the Succession to the Crown of England, 1603-1714* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).

office as an alternative to the two bodies approach.²⁰ But in positing an assured and available distinction between person and office, they are in danger of mirroring those applications of Kantorowiczian ‘two bodies’ analysis which see in it a settled and more or less common sense difference between the natural and the civil or the private and the public. One of the strengths of Kantorowicz’s argument was his acknowledgment of the lability – the figurative *energeia*, to put it in terms which are not his – of the body, across both civil and natural aspects. Among the most telling aspects of Calvin’s Case, an effort early in James’s dual reign to establish the way in which English law would seek to interpret the polity’s subsumption within a dynastic union, was a recognition from the prevailing participants that to speak of two distinct kingly bodies was perhaps heuristically viable but potentially misleading. As Francis Bacon put it, in a speech published for a fresh audience in 1641:

The Naturall body of the King hath an operation and influence into his body politique, as well as his body politique hath upon his body Naturall, And therefore that although his body politique of King of *England*, and his body politique of King of *Scotland* be severall and distinct: Yet neverthelesse, his Naturall person, which is one, hath an operation on both, and createth a privity betweene them.²¹

Bacon is insisting on the political and constitutional force of the king’s ‘natural capacity’, what he here also calls his ‘person’. He goes on to insist on the admissibility of a ‘true and legall distinction’ between the two aspects of the king, arguing in effect for the legal substantiality of his person, ‘for they that maintaine the contrary opinion doe in effect destroy the whole force of the Kings naturall capacity, as if it were drowned and

²⁰ Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, 11-40, 125-63; Norbrook, ‘Emperor’s New Body’, 344.

²¹ Francis Bacon, *Three speeches of the Right Honorable, Sir Francis Bacon Knight, then his Majesties Sollicitor Generall, after Lord Verulam, Viscount Saint Alban. Concerning the post-nati naturalization of the Scotch in England union of the lawes of the kingdomes of England and Scotland* (London, 1641), 37.

swallowed up by his politique'.²² Insofar as this sort of claim contributed to the winning arguments in Calvin's Case it 'repudiated both the idea of a fully abstract state and the impersonal conception of allegiance that it entailed'.²³ So the 'two bodies', if such they are, cannot simply be counterposed to each other: for monarchs at least (and Bacon maintains that the 'Crowne utterly differeth from all other corporations within the Realme'²⁴), the personal is also political, or civil, or constitutional. Royalist heirs of this element in the Baconian position are drawn to the same kinds of claims, just as their opponents are driven to find ways in which certain of the king's actions or utterances might be effectively stripped of legal or political force. The debate in which they are participating is in part a debate about whether, as well as how, any such distinction between natural and politic capacities can be upheld.

What, then, of a person-office distinction? Clearly, as Sarah Barber has demonstrated, it can be articulated and it has its uses.²⁵ She shows how the capacity to draw such a distinction specifically with reference to the crown enabled Thomas Chaloner and Henry Marten to challenge the terms on which the Scots Commissioners based their claims about what to do with the defeated king in 1646. For Chaloner, this is a philosophical question, a matter of logic or definition. As he argues:

Remember, this word King is of a various signification, sometimes it is taken in *abstracto*, that is for the Royall power, Function and office of a King, sometimes it is taken in *Concreto*, that is for the man or person whom we call King.²⁶

²² Bacon, *Three Speeches*, 40.

²³ Orr, *Treason and the State*, 49; see also Norbrook, 'Emperor's New Body', 344.

²⁴ Bacon, *Three Speeches*, 40.

²⁵ Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, 11-40.

²⁶ Thomas Chaloner, *An Answer to the Scotch Papers ... Concerning the disposal of the Kings Person* (London, 1646), 4.

Going on to talk of the royal office in terms that do in fact resemble Kantorowicz's account of the 'king body politic', Chaloner is nonetheless keen to strip this figure of any essential relation to a 'man or person' and in so doing to produce an account of a much-diminished Scots king in particular. And as Barber points out, the fact that this version of kingship can cite in its support Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*, - a canonical document of Scots Presbyterian political thought - makes it all the sweeter for the Scotophobic Chaloner.²⁷ It is from Rutherford that the apparently logical and legal distinction between the abstract (official) and the concrete (personal) king most immediately descends, 'an evident and sensible distinction' although 'rejected by Royalists'.²⁸

Yet the fact of and basis for its rejection, beyond the 'operation and influence' between capacities asserted by Bacon, are worth noting. A dispute over whether 'abstract' and 'concrete' can be mapped onto person and office in this way forms a minor theme in the controversy over Chaloner's speech, with pamphlets in his defence suggesting that 'this distinction of *Abstractum* and *Concretum* is as ancient as Logicke it selfe' and denouncing those 'pedantick people' who would quibble at it.²⁹ Opponents, by contrast, insisted that the alignment of 'concrete' and 'person' offended against the very logic to which Chaloner's defenders appealed, and John Cleveland reiterated this objection in his *Character of a Country Committee-man* when he described the notion of '*persona in concreto*' as 'the Solecisme of a moderne Statesman'.³⁰ Such objections amount to more than the pedantry of an overly precise Latinist, though: instead they assert the rather more fundamental claim that office is by definition personal. As Conal Condren has recently demonstrated, in early modern languages of duty or social role a 'persona' is precisely the

²⁷ Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, 11-40; Scott, 'Motives for King-Killing', 138-60.

²⁸ Rutherford, *Lex, Rex*, 265.

²⁹ *The justification of a safe and wel-grounded answer to the Scottish papers, printed under the name of Master Chaloner his speech* (London, 1646), 4; *An answer to severall objections made against some things in Mr. Thomas Chaloners speech* (London, 1646), 4.

³⁰ *An answer to a speech without doores; Animadversions upon an unsafe and dangerous answer to the Scotch-papers* (London: s. n., 1646), 3; *The speech without doores defended without reason* (London 1646), 4-5; [John Cleveland], *The Character of a Country Committee-man, with the Eare-marke of a Sequestrator* (London, 1649), 1.

form of an office, not its natural, merely human or extra-civil substrate, and therefore cannot without logical strain be defined against it.³¹ At the same time, a political ‘persona’ could not simply be differentiated from ‘some authentic residuum of selves and individuals left over from a limited, usually political world of office’.³² To speak of person and office, therefore, was not to articulate an accepted and stable opposition of kinds, but instead to invoke concepts that could be seen both as contrasting and overlapping.

Consequently, it would be an error to suggest that a person-office distinction presents a clear alternative to the arcana of ‘two bodies’ theory as a language for making sense of kingship, or that republican and anti-royalist political actors could simply use such a two-handed engine to break the spell of mystical monarchy. In Kantorowicz’s account, the term ‘body’ coincides with the word ‘king’ in extending across the levels of the political and the natural, confounding or articulating them even as it is marked by their difference, opening law onto a sense of the political that exceeds it. It therefore situates kingship as the keystone in the grand arch of constitutional thought.³³ Chaloner and Rutherford recognise that much is at stake here: their logical straightening out of these confusions, and their suggestion that the difficulty is indeed a matter of logic, seek to master both the word and the power that appears to come with it. Subsequent efforts at working out what a king is, as Joad Raymond has shown, continue to be marked by this ambition.³⁴ But the perils of the term ‘person’, perils to which such efforts at conceptual mastery are still exposed, are if anything even more awkward. Here, in a

³¹ Conal Condren, *Argument and Authority in Early Modern England: the Presupposition of Oaths and Offices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6-7.

³² Condren, *Argument and Authority*, 26.

³³ In this way of thinking about kingship, Kantorowicz is perhaps most clearly showing his uneasy debt to Carl Schmitt’s version of ‘political theology’, outlined in a monograph first published in 1922. For Schmitt the essential notion was that of sovereignty. See Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, tr. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). On the relationship with Kantorowicz, see Anslem Haverkamp, ‘Richard II and the End of Political Theology’, *Law and Literature* 16(2004), 313-26, and Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, tr. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 1-30, 91-104.

³⁴ Joad Raymond, ‘The King is a Thing’, in Raymond and Graham Parry, eds, *Milton and the Terms of Liberty* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 69-94.

concept to which that of 'king' is held to be reducible, we find the same instabilities. They mark the subsequent debates leading up to and out of the regicide, and have often been contextualised in a narrative of the development of an 'impersonal' state.³⁵ Yet the analyses of the ideological turmoil around the turn of the 1650s also show just how fraught these fundamental concepts could be. In the movement from condemning a bad king to condemning the institution of monarchy itself, in refusing any longer to distinguish between kings and tyrants, regicides and incipient republicans share this sense of a failure of distinction between person and office. If, as Barber puts it, 'the collapse of confidence in the person facilitated a critique of the office which that person had fulfilled', then the critique participated in the very flaw it was attempting to extirpate.³⁶

In this, some of the difficulties attendant on the demand for a conception of office defined against the personal, and aligned therefore with a distinction between the public and the private destined to be in its own way difficult for Western political thought, become apparent. It is not an unproblematic enterprise even for the staunchest champions of the regicide and the abolition of the kingly office. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, for example, presents a fundamental rewriting – or writing out – of kingship, while forcefully attacking Presbyterian critics of the proceedings against the king in particular. So the tract presents its own critique of monarchy, while accusing the Presbyterians of inconsistency or incoherence in their own actions and utterances. To this end, Milton follows Rutherford in anchoring the distinction between person and office in the logical difference between 'concrete' and 'abstract', and cleaves too to the implications of such a distinction for the understanding of kingship.³⁷ At the same time, he also shares Chaloner's hostility to the Presbyterian regard for the royal person

³⁵ See, for an eminent example, Quentin Skinner, 'The State', in Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell Hanson, eds, *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 90-131.

³⁶ Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, 134.

³⁷ John Milton, *Political Writings*, ed. Martin Dzelzainis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 9 & 15.

expressed in the Solemn League and Covenant. Again like Chaloner, he attempts to defeat his opponents by arguing not only that the actions they most abhor are in fact justified by their own doctrines, but also that according to their own definitions of monarchy they have long since deposed the very king whose fate they now bewail. In a rhetorically complex move, Milton borrows the Presbyterians' affect as well as quoting their arguments in turning their horror at the regicide against them, while simultaneously mimicking a *royalist* horror at their accomplishments in the years between 1641 and 1647. This ambitious strategy, though, leads him into his own difficulties. To argue that those 'who by deposing him have long since tak'n from him the life of a King, his office and his dignity ... in the truest sence may be said to have killd the King' is to emphasise as its 'truest sence' a startlingly personalised, vitalist understanding of the kingly office that would sound unsurprising coming from Shakespeare's *Richard II*.³⁸ A king deposed is not just a man out of office, since he has lost his 'true life'; in stripping Charles of 'all that could be in him of a King', the Presbyterians 'left in his person, dead as to Law, and all the civil right either of King or Subject, the life onely of a Prisner, a Captive and a Malefactor'.³⁹ Here, the abstractions of authority or office are to be talked of in the personal terms of life and death, and what exists beyond office is not so much a person as 'an underspecified residuum', as Condren puts it, a "'private" person' – if 'private' here carries the familiar sense, as it does for Milton in this passage, of privation or deprivation – 'or a pillar of salt'; yet when earlier Milton charges the Presbyterians with having covenanted to preserve only 'the meere useless bulke of his person', his language suggests instead that such lumpen concretion, 'dead as to Law', is what a person is.⁴⁰

So Milton's polemical intervention was itself caught in urgent political debate that continued to require the assertion of different claims regarding the political status of

³⁸ Ibid, 30.; William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. Charles Forker (London: Thomson, 2002), 4.1.163-318, and see Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 24-41.

³⁹ Milton, *Political Writings*, 31.

⁴⁰ Condren, *Argument and Authority*, 135 & 198.

personhood, but whose participants couldn't easily climb free of the problems they were addressing. In the subsequent exchanges over the engagement oath, the republic's opponents insisted on the intermingling of the constitutional and natural entities that the oath's proponents are trying to hold apart: the nature of allegiance, title, and lawful succession demonstrate for them that the 'politic capacities' of both ruler and subject are intelligible and practicable only through natural or personal relations. To insist that the king never dies is not in this context to conjure up an abstract *dignitas* or *universitas* that might then be counterposed to a natural or personal existence, a separation between office and office-holder, but instead to situate the civil bond of allegiance back before all ceremonies or oaths: 'he is our natural Lord, his person is King'.⁴¹ Kings and subjects are born, not made. At the same time, though, the significance for this debate of 'de facto' thinking ensures that the oath's opponents have to posit a new division between 'Naturall or Corporall possession', the de facto power of the new republic, and the 'Civill possession' or proper title still maintained by the young king.⁴² If, then, 'the problems of separating, or conceptually distinguishing, man from office [were] a constant for the troubled Stuart dynasty', they were not necessarily less of a problem either for its strongest supporters or for its opponents.⁴³

It is this context that can perhaps shed some light on Hobbes's attempt in *Leviathan* to fix the place of the person within what he calls civil science, an attempt that highlights one of the prime sources of its conceptual instability. In the last chapter of Book I, he rewrites the political significance of the person in order to resolve etymologically the 'proper signification' of the word, in tune with his customary method, and in so doing to find a way past the confusions of personhood in the political theories of others. The concept of the person becomes the means through which 'authorisation'

⁴¹ [?Francis White], *Majestas Intemerata, or The Immortality of the King* (?London., 1649), 22.

⁴² [Edward Gee], *A plea for non-scribers. Or, The grounds and reasons of many ministers in Cheshire, Lancashire and the parts adjoyning for their refusall of the late engagement modestly propounded* (London, 1650).

⁴³ Condren, *Argument and Authority*, 102.

takes place, a way of introducing substitution or representation into politics. Thus he sets up a distinction between an author, the locus of responsibility for any action, and an actor, who carries out an action in the other's name. At the same time, he introduces a difference between 'natural' and 'artificial' persons, and these distinctions could be lined up with each other to produce yet another account of a personhood distributed or differentiated across distinct natural and politic levels. No wonder, then, that 'it has come to be widely agreed that Hobbes's distinction between natural and artificial persons is equivalent to the distinction between represented persons and their representatives,' as Quentin Skinner has claimed.⁴⁴

Such a position, though, would not necessarily amount to a resolution of any of the convoluted distensions of personhood already evidenced here. Simply asserting that some persons are able to represent others does not in fact even register such difficulties. Suggesting that political representatives inhabit a personhood that is somehow artificial, though, does begin to do so: we return, it seems, to a distinction between kinds of bodies, like the contrast between concrete and abstract kings. More food for thought is offered by Skinner's subtle and 'hermeneutically daring' reading, in which this sense of the relation between natural and artificial is combined with another running counter to it:

Natural persons convert themselves into artificial persons ... by agreeing to be represented in different ways. But natural persons who agree to serve as representatives also convert themselves into artificial persons, since the act of making such an agreement is at the same time the act of turning oneself from a private individual into a public person discharging a recognised role.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Quentin Skinner, 'Hobbes and the Purely Artificial Person of the State', in *Visions of Politics, III: Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 188.

⁴⁵ Skinner, *Visions of Politics, III*, 190.

In this version, the artifice can reside at either end of the relation between represented and representative. One possibility is that the representative can be an entity defined within the language of personhood without thereby being a person *as such*. So the magistrate or the king might act in a certain way, demonstrating or using certain capacities, but does not do so as a person in his or her own right. The familiar civil war argument that tyrants are monarchs who exceed the bounds of their trust, able to blur an important distinction between their own powers and property and those of the office they exercise because of a shared language of persons, depends on just such a sense of artificial personhood. Milton's critique of the role accorded by the *Eikon Basilike's* Charles to his own conscience is an attempt to insist that in Stuart practice the artificial personhood of the monarch had been denied, neglected or overridden.⁴⁶ An alternative interpretation suggests that the personhood of the represented is artificial when it is that of a corporate or institutional entity such as a church, hospital or bridge – to cite Hobbes's own examples – which has a representative to act or speak on its behalf, as if he or she were acting for another person. In Skinner's reading, the Hobbesian state combines these ways of being artificial: it is marked both by the artifice of the representative, in that it is the corporate entity or agent created by the coming together of a multitude, and by that of the represented, insofar as it empowers a sovereign to act on its behalf.⁴⁷ Artificial personhood, then, would appear to be the condition that obtains under conditions of representation, and both this and natural personhood are unthinkable outside an already civil society that has established property relations. Natural persons, Hobbes avers, are those who own and represent themselves, who act in their own right and behalf; as soon as they enter into the relation of representation with

⁴⁶ See John Milton, *Eikonoklastes*, in Merritt Hughes, ed., *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, III (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), 335-601. That this is a distinction neither James nor Charles was prepared to acknowledge is hardly surprising. See Kevin Sharpe, 'Private Conscience and Public Duty in the Writings of Charles I', *The Historical Journal* 40 (1997), 643-65, esp. 660-62, and Smith, *Constitutional Royalism*, 208-18.

⁴⁷ Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, III, 199-204.

another, separating an actor from the behalf on which he acts, they are variously affected by artifice. Under the concept of subjective right or entitlement, representation and authorisation coincide.

Working within this frame Hobbes strives to trace all instances of artificial personhood, however configured, back to an origin in a natural, self-authorising person, and in doing so the significance of property or dominion becomes particularly evident. A representative who acts for a hospital is in fact ultimately representing a natural person who has authorised that representative. The same, Hobbes suggests, goes for ‘Children, Fooles, and Mad-men that have no use of Reason’: their personhood is underpinned by that of ‘he that hath right of governing them’. Hobbes also acknowledges that ‘an Idol, or meer Figment of the brain’ has at times ‘held Possessions, and other Goods, and Rights’ and thus been treated as a person. But ‘Idols cannot be Authors; for an Idol is nothing’. Therefore, ‘the Authority proceeded from the State’.⁴⁸ All of these persons are ultimately backed by other persons, whose status as their masters or guardians, and therefore as authors of other’s actions, is made possible by the existence of ‘Civill Government’.

Hobbes’s containment of representation within the context of dominion, and of the concept of the person within the frame of representation, is perhaps a response to the various significations that the word ‘person’ carries in the debates of his own time. But the etymological account of the person that Hobbes gives at the beginning of Chapter 16 points to problems with this attempt to configure its meaning. Here, Hobbes remarks on an origin to which Rutherford’s and Chaloner’s quibbling opponents made implicit reference:

The word Person is latine: instead whereof the Greeks have *προσωπον*, which signifies the *Face*, as *Persona* in latine signifies the *disguise* or *outward appearance* of a man,

⁴⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 114-15.

counterfeited on the Stage: and sometimes more particularly that part of it which disguiseth the face, as a Mask or Vizard: And from the Stage, hath been translated to any Representer of speech and action, as well in Tribunalls, as Theaters. So that a *Person*, is the same that an *Actor* is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation; and to *Personate* is to *Act*, or *Represent* himselfe, or an other, and he that acteth another, is said to beare his Person, or act in his name.⁴⁹

This invocation of a theatrical origin is crucial in revealing the fundamental complexities in the notion of the person that Hobbes is seeking to untangle. The fact that his account is still capable of generating such contrasting readings three and a half centuries later suggests that this resort to etymology cannot quite do the job he wants. For a start, associating the person with the outward appearance, mask, and even disguise implies that personhood is much more the property of the representative than the represented. The association of person with actor merely confirms this, as does the apparently parallel suggestion that personating is acting, but the following claim that to act another is ‘to bear his person’ appears to complicate matters again. In this sense, personation is the process of bearing another person, from another time or place: it is carried across in the action of the actor, animates his face with its own.

But if a person is an *actor*, then personation is the process of actively *ascribing* the quality of personhood to something which doesn’t necessarily have it, being inanimate, notional or dead – the process or trope of personification, what Greek and Renaissance rhetoricians call *prosopopeia* – or of giving personhood to something which, like the god represented by an idol or a character represented in a play, ‘is nothing’. Personhood is not derived from a source and ‘borne’ by an actor: it is what the actor brings to the process of representation. Such an understanding is encouraged by Hobbes’s own

⁴⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 112.

reference in the chapter's opening sentence to persons by 'fiction'. As Skinner notes, he returns to this topic in *De Homine*, explicitly linking fictitious persons to the characters played by actors on stage:

For it was understood in the ancient theatre that not the player himself but someone else was speaking, for example Agamemnon, namely when the player, putting on the false face [faciem fictitiam] of Agamemnon, was for the time being Agamemnon. At a later stage, however, this was understood to be so even in the absence of the mask, namely when the actor declared publicly which character [personam] he was going to play.⁵⁰

This passage clearly indicates some of the tangles of this theatrical notion of personhood (evident perhaps in its avoidance of the word *persona* for 'mask', confining it to what we would call 'character'; to use it for both, as might be expected, would precisely risk confusion). On the one hand, the actor is a substratum who doesn't speak for himself, bearing the person of Agamemnon. Actors are not persons; they 'personate', and persons are what they play in doing so. On the other hand, the character is nothing unless given personhood by the actor – Agamemnon is only a character or part to be personated by someone else, a fiction. Most importantly, he and other stage characters evade the frame of authorisation: Hanna Pitkin was therefore right to suggest that the theatrical example was an awkward model for Hobbes's theory of representation.⁵¹ Skinner argues that the English professional theatre's dependence on government authorisation before 1642, and its subsequent prohibition by Parliament, demonstrate the model's fitness for Hobbes's

⁵⁰ Hobbes, *De Homine*, translated and quoted in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, III, 193. Translation slightly, if problematically, amended – 'character' makes sense to the modern reader, but the word's early modern usage differed from ours. Compare the very different translation of the second sentence here offered in Bernard Gert, ed., *Thomas Hobbes: Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 83; Skinner's rendering makes much better sense of what he himself calls a 'dark passage'.

⁵¹ Hanna Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 25.

purposes.⁵² But as Hobbes might be expected to know, especially given the aptitude and fondness for both professional and non-professional drama demonstrated by his patrons, the Cavendish family, not all performance required such authorisation in order to take place.⁵³ And there is anyway a manifest difference between playing the part of Agamemnon and performing with the authority of the Master of the Revels: it is the former, dramaturgical capability to which Hobbes looks in order to make sense of political representation, not the latter. To attempt to explain authorisation via an instance of authorisation would simply be to beg the question.

So the theatrical sense of the person is a problem, and its problematic nature appears perhaps most fully in the Hobbesian claim that personating can be playing oneself as well as another, especially given the potentially worrying conjunction of face and disguise in the conjunction of *persona* and *prosopon*.⁵⁴ If the natural person is here an actor playing himself, then a natural person is as much constituted through the activity of personation as the artificial, and matters become as potentially comic, and in this context disturbing, as when Dick Robinson is substituted for himself in Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*, or when any boy played a girl playing a boy on the pre-war English stage.⁵⁵ Nature, too, depends on the artifice of representation: the figure whose person the actor bears cannot ever appear as such, and all the world shares in the ontology of the stage. What is queried here is the claim that Hobbes makes so forcefully in the cases of bridges, madmen and idols: that there is an apparently necessary and ultimately apparent relation to an original, *authorial* instance of the person in all personation. The fundamental reason

⁵² Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, III, 194.

⁵³ Lynn Hulse, ed., *Dramatic works by William Cavendish*, Malone Society Reprints, 158 (1996); S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, *Renaissance drama by women: texts and documents* (London: Routledge, 1996), 3–4, 127–54; Emma Rees, *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, 91–113; Randall, *Winter Fruit*, 313–36; Hero Chalmers, *Royalist Women Writers, 1650–1689* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 132–48.

⁵⁴ Victoria Kahn has emphasised this element in the Hobbesian account of the person, though to rather different ends: see 'Hamlet or Hecuba: Carl Schmitt's Decision', *Representations* 83 (2003), 67–96, esp. 78–80.

⁵⁵ Ben Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*, ed. Peter Happé (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 2.8 and 3.4.

why this is hard to maintain is that the concept and the dramatic inheritance to which Hobbes appeals in fact posits personation as a transformative process in which personhood can be both given and taken.⁵⁶ The constitution even of natural persons through this process ensures that even in the last instance personhood might be not the ground but the effect of representation, and might therefore always be fictional. Hobbes's recourse to the concept of the person is not the resolution, but rather another instance, of the mid-century difficulties afflicting the thinking of a politically significant personhood.

III

In seeking an explanation in the *theatrical* experience or rendering of personhood, however, Hobbes demonstrates one of the more striking ways in which this art influenced the political imagination of both royalists and their opponents. His sense of the relevance of theatre and his investment in an understanding of what happens in performance reveal how the essential characteristics of an art, and issues of artistic form, are interwoven with pressing and fundamental political problems. Such claims are familiar enough in criticism of Shakespearean and early seventeenth century drama, particularly so in relation to the issue of kingship, and a range of critics have explored the ways in which, after 1642, drama and political upheaval are bound together in ways which make the former much more than a mirror in which events are reflected.⁵⁷ What can be noted here, though, is the particular, dense conjunction around the turn of the

⁵⁶ For an exploration of this in the rhetorical or tropological terms of *prosopopeia*, see James Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵⁷ Some classic instances include Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: the Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (London: Methuen, 1986), Christopher Pye, *The Regal Phantasm: Theatricality and Power in Shakespeare and the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1990), Louis Adrian Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). On theatre in the civil wars, see Wiseman, *Drama and Politics*, Randall, *Winter Fruit*, Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

1650s of events and their narratives, theatre and theatricality, and pressing demands on the politics of personhood. And the drama of this short period, as much as the political and philosophical writing of Hobbes and Milton, participates in this conjunction.

The narrative of royal fortunes in these years often meets in parts the generic patterns familiar from dramatic exemplars. By late 1651, Charles I and his two eldest sons had all taken to disguise at some point in the previous five years in order to negotiate a path through dangerous circumstances, and in so doing had fitted themselves to the model of the disguised hero of romance, comedy and tragicomedy. Unsurprisingly, this conduct finds an echo in the dramatic writing of the period, especially that which is coloured by royalist sympathies or permits their articulation. At the beginning of Act 3 of John Tatham's *The Distracted State*, supposedly written in 1641 but published in 1650, the 'Vanquish'd king' Evander comes on stage for the first time and introduces himself in a manner that points up the consonance between his and Stuart circumstances:

Pursu'd by my bad Fate, whose Cruelty
I knew would not admit of any Mean
Should it once seize on me, I struck my self
Into Disguise...

His friend Missellus offers him counsel, urging him:

be but pleas'd to suffer
Under this Clowd awhile, and you'l appear
More glorious to your Peoples eyes and hearts,

When time presents a fitness for discovery.⁵⁸

The language is in some ways conventional, of course, but it chimes with the way in which Charles I's 'clouded majesty' had been framed and described in the later 1640s.⁵⁹

In Cosmo Manuche's play *The Just General*, published in 1652, the flight of King Amasius is described in terms that recall the circumstances of Charles I's second escape, from Hampton Court in 1647:

Antonio: These stormes presage no good. The
Generall now arrived at Court,
Whose business with the King requires hast; Delirus
With confidence conveighs him to the King his
Closet; where when arrived, instead of King
They found a letter with his own hand writ...⁶⁰

Later in the same play, Manuche includes a direct reference to the escape of the Duke of York from custody in 1648. Antonio is out looking for the disguised King, and has been examining each 'stripling of eighteen' he sees. He scruples at searching every 'handsome gentlewoman', though with some reservations; as he says, it is 'now in fashion for Princes to make scapes in / Womens habit'.⁶¹ Given Manuche's own past as a royalist combatant, and the play's dedication to his patron, the Earl of Northampton, this might seem an unlikely or uncomfortable topic for a humorous aside – but it is precisely its assimilation

⁵⁸ J[ohn] T[atham], *The Distracted State, a Tragedy* (London, 1650), 14.

⁵⁹ Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry*, 129-91; Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 247-71.

⁶⁰ Cosmo Manuche, *The Just General, A Tragi-Comedy* (London, 1652), 24.

⁶¹ Manuche, *Just General*, 46.

to the conventions of romance that here makes it humorous and unthreatening.⁶² A year later, Henry Killigrew republished his play *Pallantas and Eudora*, which had appeared – unauthorised and uncorrected – in 1638 under the title *The Conspiracy*. Included in Act 3 of this edition, but missing from its earlier publication, is a reference to one of the characters appearing ‘disguis’d like a Saylor’, a costume Charles II was said to have assumed for part of his journey from Worcester into exile.⁶³

Such topical references, though, are only the least consequential element in the conjunction of theatricality and the terms of political debate in the drama written around the turn of the decade. More significant are the connotations which cluster round disguise itself, not merely a thematic or performative element in so many productions in the preceding decades,⁶⁴ but also a term that Hobbes treated as synonymous with personating in general. In the aftermath of Worcester, Charles II’s story became entangled with that of Captain James Hind, the highwayman and royalist soldier captured in London on November 9th 1651. Hind had become the focus for chapbook attention before his capture and continued to be so during his imprisonment and subsequent judicial proceedings.⁶⁵ Among the works that helped to build his persona was a short play entitled *The Prince of Priggs’ Revels*, casting some of Hind’s most celebrated exploits into dramatic form. Act 5 of the play sees Hind, as was widely rumoured at the time, helping Charles in his escape from Worcester. Interestingly, the first lines that Hind speaks to the young ‘King of Scots’ are quoted more or less verbatim from a poem written by the most

⁶² William Proctor Williams, ‘Manuche, Cosmo (*bap.* 1613, *d.* 1673?)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18010>, accessed 27 July 2007].

⁶³ Henry Killigrew, *Pallantus and Eudora, a Tragoedie* (London, 1653), 30. *The True Speech Delivered on the Scaffold by James, Earl of Derby* (London, 1651), 6.

⁶⁴ See, classically, M.C. Bradbrook, ‘Shakespeare and the Use of Disguise in Elizabethan Drama’, *Essays in Criticism* 2 (1952), 159–68, and recently Peter Hyland, ‘The Performance of Disguise’, *Early Theatre* 5 (2002), 77–83.

⁶⁵ Barbara White, ‘Hind, James (*bap.* 1616, *d.* 1652)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13340>, accessed 2 August 2007]. See also Karsten Piep, ‘“The Merry Life and Mad Exploits of Captain James Hind,” or, How the Popular Press Created its First Outlaw-Hero in the Wake of the English Revolution’, *Comitatus* 35 (2004), 124–44, Jerome Friedman, *Miracles and the Pulp Press during the English Revolution* (London: UCL Press, 1993) 207–15.

celebrated royalist poet of the age, John Cleveland, in response to the elder Charles's flight from Oxford in disguise in 1646.⁶⁶ In 'The King's Disguise', Cleveland hyperbolically explores the consequences of Charles's divesting himself of his office and going out into his kingdom under cover.⁶⁷ The poem imagines Charles's adoption of disguise as figuring the kind of autoimmunity of the royal person that royalists were so keen to preclude, that Chalonier was using to such notable effect around the time of its composition, and that Cleveland also ridiculed in his *Character of a Country Committee-man*. It expresses the highly dangerous wish for precisely what royalists did not usually seek, 'a State-distinction to arraigne / *Charles* of high Treason 'gainst my Sovereigne', while suggesting that 'What an usurper to his [P]rince is wont, / Cloyster and shave him, he himselfe hath don 't'.⁶⁸ Tellingly, the king has 'muffled feature[s]'. According to the taxonomy of disguise Susan Baker has offered for Shakespearean drama, Cleveland's Charles should be classified among those who disguise themselves by obscuring the face rather than by impersonating another. The veil or vizard borne by such figures 'inscribes an absence and an ignorance', making them the de-personified product of personation.⁶⁹ For Cleveland, a king disguised is a king 'defac'd' and thereby ruined, his monarchical integration of capacities or elements rendered inconsistent or incomplete. The monarch appears only insofar as he is stretched along an extended line between the face and the defacer, and fully present as neither.

There is an echo here once again of *Richard II*'s phenomenological account of exploded monarchy, especially the deposed king's figuration of himself as, in quick succession, 'person', 'nothing' and quasi-human clock.⁷⁰ In this context, Charles II's

⁶⁶ J. S., *An Excellent Comedy Called The Prince of Priggs Revells* (London, 1651), 13.

⁶⁷ Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry*, 138-47; Daniel Jaeckle, 'From Witty History to Typology: John Cleveland's *The Kings Disguise*', in Joseph Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds, *The English Civil Wars in the Literary Imagination* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 71-80.

⁶⁸ John Cleveland, *The Character of a London Diurnall: with Severall Select Poems* (London, 1647), 31.

⁶⁹ Susan Baker, 'Personating Persons: Rethinking Shakespearean Disguises', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 43 (1992), 303-16.

⁷⁰ Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 5.5.31, 38, 50-60.

association with Hind seems less a simple historical conjunction and more a likeness traceable to shared habitation of the dark territory proper to, but also destructive of, personhood, the abjected status of those ‘dead as to Law’, as Milton put it, who can live ‘the life onely of a Prisner, Captive and a Malefactor’.⁷¹ Hind’s capture and imprisonment serves as a placeholder for the ‘lowest degradement and incapacity of the regal name’, even as the escapades written up and celebrated during that captivity appear to create an ‘imaginary yet political space’ in which such degradation might be redeemed.⁷² It is perhaps significant, given the chapbooks’ balancing of these different elements, that *The Prince of Priggs Revels* concludes with the disguised king telling sad stories of the death of ‘all bodies politick’ while Hind offers him a grimly double-edged promise of bare-faced fidelity. ‘Let me be hang’d if I prove false to you’, he says; as ‘J.S.’, the play’s author, could reasonably have surmised, the gallows were indeed Hind’s eventual destination.⁷³

In this play, then, the figure of the disguised king serves as an emblem for the fraught politics of royal personhood. Elsewhere, disguise is the occasion for related but not identical examination of the issues involved in this politics. In Christopher Wase’s allegorical translation of Sophocles’s *Electra*, for example, the character of Clytemnestra personifies the Parliament while that of Orestes figures Charles II: he personates him and she them, redoubling the extent of personation in the play.⁷⁴ Political representation is therefore even more deeply enmeshed in its rhetorical and theatrical means, and *Electra* also manages to narrate this essential figural element in its construction. Orestes returns home in disguise, confirming the news of his death to his sister, offering her an urn in which, he claims, his own residuum or remains, his ‘Funerall reliques’, are to be found.⁷⁵ He is oddly distended, present on the stage in two defaced or incomplete instances:

⁷¹ Milton, *Political Writings*, 31.

⁷² Ibid., 30; Piep, “‘Merry Life’”, 135.

⁷³ J.S., *Prince of Priggs Revels*, 14.

⁷⁴ C[hristopher] W[ase], *Electra of Sophocles* (The Hague, 1649), 5.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 42.

Electra bewails the fact that she must make do with the ‘dust and uselesse shade’ of the urn, substituted for Orestes’ ‘sweet Face’, even while her brother stands disguised before her.⁷⁶ The revenge of Orestes on his mother then also becomes his own redemption from such a troubled personhood. In the same spirit, a poem entitled ‘The Return’ appended to the play looks forward to Charles’s appearance ‘on our Isles’, and imagines the ‘Royal Stranger’ overcoming his enemies.⁷⁷ Here, the language of a reintegrated royal personhood, cut free of the difficulties of personation, is given full and defiant rein. In Wase’s play, theatrical representation is the scene and the mode of royal suffering, but also the space in which its prospective redemption can be asserted.

This latter potential perhaps helps to explain why some critics have been persuaded that the surviving texts of plays from this period contain evidence of possible performance.⁷⁸ These scripts are prospective: they look forward to their actualisation, and in so doing mimic the element of articulate political longing in post-regicide royalism. While the more scholarly or readerly apparatus of Wase’s translation doesn’t enhance this prospective sense, its status as potential performance does mirror its royalist hopes. The difficulty with this is that a sense of the play as prospective actualisation also resembles the rather darker invocation of theatricality as a tragic condition that we find in the royalist writing of the time. The playtext anticipates a performance with which it is not identical. The imperilled king, too, is theatrically distended, and in adopting disguise he vividly recalls the fundamental elements of theatricality itself, its constitutive dependence on disguise, masking, the processes of impersonation and personification that animate the relation between actor and character, performance and text, and which may not allow personhood to resolve itself into a simple or settled notion.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁷ Ibid., ‘The Epilogue’, 1.

⁷⁸ A particularly forceful instance of this is William Nelles, ‘Cosmo Manuche’s Castle Ashby Plays as Theater Pieces’, *English Language Notes* 28 (1990), 39-51.

We can see this somewhat involved manifestation of the royalist resort to theatre in another of the plays that Cosmo Manuche presented to James Compton, Earl of Northampton, some time in the early 1650s. Unlike *The Just General*, *Love in Travell* was never printed, and survives now only in a single presentation copy. It is also a comedy, rather than a tragedy or tragicomedy, and it features no royal persons. It does, however, concern the trials of royalist partisans who have fought in the wars and are now living in disguise. Colonel Allworth has been financially ruined as a result of his service and his persisting loyalty; Lieutenant Shiftwell works at an inn in the guise of Bolster, a chamberlain, providing assistance and hospitality when possible to other undercover royalists. The play handles their disguise with ambivalence: on the one hand, it is a mark of their dislocation from the proper personhood they inhabited prior to a time ‘when base Rebellion / Storm’d a Noble Cause’, as Shiftwell puts it.⁷⁹ And the nature or extent of their disguise differs, too: while Shiftwell personates Bolster, Allworth has an altogether more shadowy or faceless life in disguise. Indeed, like Wase’s Orestes, he is sufficiently dislocated to announce his own death. Yet disguise is also the means by which they might escape the penal consequences of their royalism, including the powerlessness of debt. In this, their condition parallels that of the daughter of Sir Peircival Fondlin, who like a classic comic heroine has left her family and her allotted identity in pursuit of Allworth, with whom she has fallen in love. Unlike a classic heroine, however, Arabella is entirely absent until Act 5, when the play stages the resolution of its own plot through a masque ostensibly performed at Sir Peircival’s instigation to distract him from his sorrows. This masque becomes the means by which everyone can be returned to themselves: Arabella is introduced in the guise, tellingly, of a veiled gipsy, and then ‘discovered’ to her astonished and delighted father. Similarly, Allworth and Shiftwell are recognised and reintegrated as full personae. The masque is in this sense an instance

⁷⁹ Cosmo Manuche, *Love in Travell*, BL Add. MS 60275, f.27r.

of theatre's self-cancelling drive, as it stages the process whereby dramatic personhood – disguise – can be made to give way to self-identity beyond the enforced play of personation.

Yet there is, even in this comedy, something that resists the containment of the awkward condition of personation in the device of a play within the play. Although the masque allows for the emergence from disguise of underlying persons, it also contains some loose ends. Not all the masquers are given the faces both of part and actor. Masquing shepherds and shepherdesses are carefully identified as characters from elsewhere in the play, while the part of Fortune is played by Allworth's sister, Isabella. But two of the veiled 'Antick Gipsies' are not unveiled, and the presiding divine presence of Phebe is similarly untraceable to another, more fundamental, persona. Are these gipsies, then, gipsies in the world outside the masque, somehow playing a part within it? Does their disguise belong to the masque, or to the play? No answer is forthcoming. As Lois Potter has remarked, 'the apparently fictitious interlude merges with the supposedly real events of the play'; the fact that Sir Peircival invokes the aid of Phebe, 'thou Goddess of all tender youth', to protect his wayward daughter towards the beginning of the play might lead us to assume that the later intervention by such a figure is that of the goddess herself, *in propria persona*, rather than of a character playing her part.⁸⁰ So the figure of Phebe would from this standpoint appear to be a person on a level with Sir Peircival, a divinity intervening directly in his world much as the god Hymen plays a part in the resolution of *As You Like It*. In slightly different ways, the strangely undisguised goddess and the veiled gipsies of the masque return to the play the sense of a compromising process of personation, and an accompanying uncanny theatricality, that its resolution would appear to want to banish.

⁸⁰ Potter, "True Tragicomedies", 211; Manuche, *Love in Travell*, f.10v.

To say this is not to make a claim for the originality of Manuche's drama – the concluding masque, the intervening deity and the disguised heroine among the gipsies all have ample precedent in pre-war English drama. Yet its interest, like that of the other dramatic works touched on here, does not depend on any such claim. Rather, its distinctiveness resides in the way in which the conjunction or mutual influence of embattled and disguised kings or princes, an embattled royalist political ontology of kingship, and the theatrical problematics of personation can invest particular conventions or kinds of cultural practice with a renewed or fresh urgency. Suddenly, from different but related angles, both disguise and the broader process of personation for which it stands are imbued with an acute political and philosophical force. As the example of Hobbes shows, theatre is much more than the neutral arena in which events or ideas are replayed or represented, or a source of ready analogies: it turns out to be crucial in allowing participants in political or polemical contest to think through their positions, while also proving ultimately to outstrip that thinking. The politics of the person thus remains an issue, a condition, perhaps particularly acutely in a play such as *Love in Travell* that seeks to use a dramatic practice, the masque, to overcome the perils of this condition. This, perhaps, is the tragicomic performance integral to the royalist cause during its long eclipse, the drama of disguise on which William Towers hoped to be able to bring down the curtain in 1660.